

Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service



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Dear Friend:

We are happy to bring you another edition of the *Illinois Agricultural Statistics Annual Summary*. This annual summary represents the efforts of a large number of people all around Illinois and serves as a historical document which recaps the results from a multitude of surveys during the previous year. The basic information is supplied voluntarily by thousands of grain farmers, livestock producers, fruit and vegetable growers, grain elevators, slaughter and dairy plants, retail stores that serve farm families, and other producers and agribusinesses.

Without a doubt, 2003 went down in history as a record setting year for Illinois producers. Fat cattle prices over a dollar a pound, that was a first. Soft red winter wheat average yields surpassing the previous record by 4 bushels per acre caught most small grain farmers by surprise. Total corn production at 1.812 billion bushels breaks the previous record set in 1994. In addition, hog prices rebounded nicely from the lows of 2002 and although soybean yields were somewhat disappointing, bean prices were not with many farmers receiving harvest prices as high as 8 dollars per bushel. All in all, it was a pretty good year for most.

Our mission is to **“serve Illinois, its agriculture and its rural communities by providing meaningful, accurate and objective statistical information”**. The year 2004 edition of the *Annual Summary* will continue to provide over 150 tables of statistical information covering virtually every commodity grown or livestock raised in the State. In addition, a wealth of economic data is also included along with the latest results from the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

Although much of the statistical information we publish is for the benefit of farmers, others who serve the agriculture sector also benefit. One of the strengths of our free society is our public information system. Our statistics are not just for the government but are provided on an equal basis to producers, buyers, processors, suppliers, and other interested parties.

The staff of the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service is dedicated to serving agricultural data needs for all users. Please contact us any time with your questions, comments and requests for information.

Respectfully,

Brad Schwab, Director
Illinois Agricultural Statistics

